Twelve Great Artist

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Olivia Howe Downes

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TWELVE GREAT ARTISTS

BY

WILLIAM HOWE DOWNES

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Author's Note

OUT of a vast mass of newspaper articles, the majority of which must in the nature of the case be of ephemeral interest only, I have taken the twelve papers here collected, because they seem fittest to survive the life of an hour. Whatever was hasty, excessive, or trivial, has been cut out, after a long seasoning process, and, as the chapters now stand, they represent fairly and fully my best artistic intuitions and my strongest convictions.

A good reason for rescuing any good thing from the limbo of old newspaper files should be twofold. It must, in the first place, have reference to a question of more than transitory importance;

and in the second place it must be dealt with seriously, sincerely, and competently.

A still more intimate reason for being may be cited in behalf of this little book. These essays are in a peculiar sense the expression of my own personal preferences and sympathies; and although I am far from being above the desire to please, the words here uttered are inspired by a deeper motive — that of being completely loyal to my best ideals of sweetness and light. It is in vain that we journalists cultivate the lifelong professional habit of merging ourselves in the impersonal editorial entity; a man's a man for a' that, and, as a man, he has his opinions, faiths, enthusiasms, which are a part of him. Of course, if these be worth printing, it is because of

their individuality, in form as well as in essence.

"A Day with Hals" was the bulk of a letter written from Holland in the summer of 1891. The fragmentary chapters on Rembrandt and Rubens belong to the same period and the same series of letters from Holland and Belgium. The chapter about Fortuny is composed of the best part of a letter from New York, written at the time of the exhibition and sale of the Stewart collection. The fragment with regard to Daubigny is new, and was added simply because I could not bear to write a book without putting into it something of what I feel for the work of that incomparable landscape painter. My attention was drawn to Félicien Rops and his works by my friend Mr.

S. R. Koehler, Curator of the print department, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, who furnished me with the opportunities to study the engravings and lithographs of that singular genius. The chapter about Boutet de Monvel is very little changed from its original form, and the same thing is true of the paper on St. Gaudens's Shaw Monument. As for the essays on Winslow Homer, George Inness, and John LaFarge, they are mosaics, patiently put together, composed of a great number of parts taken from many different articles, written at intervals years apart, but, as may be seen, not unrelated. Portions of three articles, printed at intervals of a few days, in 1899, have been joined to form the chapter on John Sargent's portraits.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

It is with more than a perfunctory sentiment of gratitude that I acknowledge the courtesy of the Boston Transcript Company in giving me permission to reprint the larger part of the matter contained in this volume.

WILLIAM HOWE DOWNES.

Boston, May, 1900.

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A DAY WITH HALS

Twelve Great Artists

A DAY WITH HALS

OF the many qualities desirable in a portrait, the most essential is likeness. This supreme merit has been possessed in the highest degree by the great portrait painters of all times, — by Holbein, Van Dyck, Titian, Raphael, Velasquez, Rembrandt, and Hals, and by the lesser great men of later days; and it is a pre-eminent characteristic of the work of the Dutch old masters. By likeness I do not mean a literal and superficial resemblance, but the most complete truthfulness and fidelity to the character and expression of the sitter. Whatever defects may be found in the works of the old Dutch portrait painters, they are so universally honest, truthful,

trustworthy, that as biographical and historical documents they may be accepted implicitly. It is one of the most surprising experiences that comes to the student of the history of art in the galleries of Holland to discover such rare excellences in the paintings of many ancient artists absolutely unknown to fame.

Not many years ago, soon after Eugène Fromentin had issued his brilliant and authoritative volume of criticism on "Les Maîtres d'Autrefois," the world of artists jubilantly rediscovered the almost forgotten master Frans Hals. Inasmuch as he is the undisputed prince of painters among his countrymen, and excels particularly in those great groups of life-size figures known in Holland as Regenten-Stukken, or Corporation-pieces, — a class of portrait paintings brought to singular perfection in his

time and school, — it will be worth while to say a few words about these peculiarly Dutch productions in general before proceeding to a particular consideration of his works.

These life-size portrait groups, in the painting of which not only Hals and Rembrandt and Van der Helst, but many others, — such as Van Ravesteyn, Flinck, and De Keyser, — distinguished themselves, contain sometimes as many as thirty or forty half-length or three-quarters-length figures. In many cases these figures are to be seen gathered about the festive banquet board, and are depicted in the acts of eating, drinking, conversation, song, and laughter. Sometimes they are represented in a solemn business conclave, discussing the weighty affairs of commerce which come before boards of directors; again they

are seen assembling in the armory of some shooting club, preparing to sally forth in gaudy regimentals for a parade and target competition; or it may be that they are pictured as they listen to a lecture on anatomy by a distinguished surgeon; but there are not a few instances in which they are merely posed in a group without any pretence of being there for any other purpose than that of having their likenesses painted. In every Dutch art museum of any consequence are hung imposing specimens of this difficult sort of painting, vast canvases filled with living personages of an unquestionable Dutch stamp. In The Hague, for instance, at the old and drowsy Municipal Museum, not far from the Mauritshuis, little visited by the hurried traveller, is a large gallery full of Jan Van Ravesteyn's paint-

ings. It is safe to say that few people have ever heard of this artist, yet his Regenten-Stukken are wonders of life-size portraiture on a grand scale, masterly and superb works. And in the huge Rijks-Museum at Amsterdam a long double suite of lofty alcoves in the great Hall of Honor is crowded by large paintings of the same class, signed by a score of names seldom heard outside of Holland. It is needless to allude in detail to such famous examples of Corporation-pieces as Rembrandt's much-misunderstood "Night Watch," his ponderous "Syndics," his "Anatomy Lecture," or to Van der Helst's brilliant and interesting banqueting scene, all of which are intended for nothing more nor less than portrait works. These few more celebrated canvases loom above the rest of their kind be-

cause of great imaginative qualities, great intellectual qualities, glorious color, or pronounced individuality; but it may be said that, as far as painting goes, if we can narrow our view so as to look only at the craftsmanship, they are but so many drops in the Dutch bucket, where great workmanship is the rule rather than the exception, the school being greater than any man in it.

It is in Haarlem, only a few miles from Amsterdam, that Hals must be studied. One might as well claim to know Velasquez without having been in Madrid, Rubens without having been in Antwerp, or Rembrandt without having been in Amsterdam, as to assume any familiarity with Hals without having paid a visit to the tranquil little city of Haarlem, which was his home, and which should be the Mecca of every

artist's pilgrimage. A day in the gallery of the quaint town-hall, where his magnificent row of large portrait groups hangs, is one of the richest treats that Europe has to offer to whomsoever appreciates the art of painting. Neither Madrid nor Antwerp, with their more than regal treasures of art, causes a more lasting impression of individual greatness. Frans Hals may be ranked, as a portrait painter, alongside of the greatest, not only for his unexcelled virtuosity, in which he is allowed to be a passed master, and the peer of Rubens and Veronese, but also for his elegance and distinction of style, his profound knowledge of human nature, his irresistible and contagious humor, his grasp of character, and his phenomenal capacity to express the most elusive and subtile personal traits.

The fine things, in a more technical sense, about Hals's paintings, are their tremendous spirit and vivacity; their ease, dash, fluency, bravura; their wonderful freedom and looseness of touch; their splendid breadth and largeness of effect; their brilliant and mellow color; their firm, true, and bold draughtsmanship; their infallibly good arrangement. Difficulties seem not to have existed for him; or, rather, to have existed simply to give him the joy of overcoming them. There has never been a painter in any school or age who understood better and controlled more fully the resources of his art. He was a magician of the brush.

The young French and American artists who, moved by Fromentin's eloquence, have talked Hals, preached Hals, and tried in vain to paint Hals, have

made a mistake which is not unnatural, and this mistake is in supposing that Hals was merely a skilful technician. His skill, it is true, is worthy of all they have said, of all they can say of it, but when they stop there they tell only half the story. An executant of the first order, with all that that implies, Hals was not only that; he was moreover an intellectual man and a person of sentiment and imagination. What he had to say was as remarkable and as well worth saying as his way of saying it was fine and grand and powerful. This is one of the significant things that a journey to Haarlem reveals, and it confirms my belief that first-class technique and first-class mental endowments go together; that good workmanship presupposes intellectual force in the workman; and that there is no way

for a painter to prove his superiority of mind and heart so satisfactorily as by painting well.

Now let me tell you in a few words of the impression made by the gallery of portraits in Haarlem. Beginning near the door where visitors enter the room, the great line of pictures by Hals is hung in chronological order, so that they give a complete résumé of the painter's career from the period of his first youthful successes up to his extreme old age, in which he painted, like Titian, better than ever. This unexampled showing of the life-work of a great artist, all brought together as a permanent monument to his fame, in his own city, is, it may well be supposed, most interesting and imposing. One sees here, far more clearly than in reading all the biographies and criticisms possible, the

growth, development, and maturity of this extraordinary talent. All its stages are defined, all its idiosyncrasies illustrated and explained. The man and the artist are mirrored forth from boyhood to senility with the utmost vividness.

It is hard to say to which period of such a prodigious painter's career belong the brightest honors. Already great in his young days, he seems to have climbed steadily from triumph to triumph, without retrogression and without faltering. The earliest paintings naturally show the most careful regard for finish; the intermediate works are more confidently executed; and those of the last period are still more broadly and loosely painted. It is the usual order of progression. Hals, with all his power of indicating much by a few strokes, did not disdain finish, nor did he ever intentionally slight de-

tails; and although he understood so well the useful principle of sacrifices, he knew just when and where to apply it, and just when and where not to apply it. He always placed the right emphasis in the most telling place. None of his works, not even the most summary, look unfinished, careless, or slovenly. He could be superbly dashing in his manner, none more so, but it is perfectly obvious that he always knew precisely what he was about, never forgot himself, coolly calculated all his effects, and succeeded in stirring others without losing his own *sang froid*. In a word, he was thoroughly well balanced.

His paintings are as florid and beautiful in color as they are lively in movement and animated in expression. The range and diversity of his tones are extraordinary. The resources of his pal-

ette are boundless. The flesh in the faces and hands of his subjects; their gay costumes of fine fabrics in brown, yellow, red, orange, green, blue, purple, gray, and white; the splendid banners and waving plumes of his gallant revellers; the costly tableware, china, glass, silver, snowy damask, juicy fruits, and other appetizing edibles; the tempting array of wines, — all these are combined with a boldness and a knowledge of harmonious contrasts which remind one of Paul Veronese. The eyes rove with unspeakable delight over these great expanses of flaming and flashing color.

The ease and adroitness of Hals's handiwork are of those delectable qualities that never become otherwise than enjoyable. The touch, which is unlike any other painter's, has something piquant and capricious about it. Light as a

feather here, firm as the everlasting hills there; now deliberate, now rapid as a lightning-flash; whatever change may be rung upon it, it is always right, always fit.

This superior work is not by any means spent on trivial or uninteresting or unworthy subjects. The groups of people seen in Hals's Corporation-pieces are, like the upper-class Dutch of to-day, genial, handsome, happy, possessing the finest complexions to be found anywhere outside of England, and, what is more, they are persons of intelligence and good breeding. Here we have a grand dinner-party of a company of gallant musketeers who are just assembling. Two friends meet and shake hands, smiling and jolly, beaming with joyous anticipations of a social evening, good cheer of meat and drink, of story and song.

What amiable and contented expressions light up the visages of these good fellows! Merely to see them is enough to put one in a good humor with the world.

Portraits like this are more than portraits. The personages are so striking and remarkable in so many ways that they rise to the dignity and importance of historic characters. Hals has the faculty of interesting everybody in his people. Instead of admiring a series of effigies, as clever counterfeits of men, the observer finds himself speculating about their lives and fortunes, envying their sunny temperament, approving their charming urbanity and cordiality, marvelling at their overflowing vitality and effervescent animal spirits, and wishing to be better acquainted with them. The old phrase "a speaking likeness" is exceptionally applicable to all of Hals's

people, who are the most loquacious of the inhabitants of the country of art. In looking at them it is easy to fancy that one overhears scraps of jovial conversation, amidst a cheerful hum of dinner-table chat, with occasional outbursts of hearty laughter. There are serious faces, too,—faces of an intelligent and refined cast, types of solid and manly character. Whatever the expression may be, it is the tremendous vitality which leaves the most durable impression on the memory. Life is the Alpha and Omega of Frans Hals's art.

Toward the end of the series are two groups of elderly people,—the directors of some charitable institutions,—a group of men and a group of women. These were painted when Hals was quite old. They are among the most interesting pictures to be seen in Holland. The

handling, which is in the painter's most ragged and sketchy manner, is an extreme instance of a great practician's suggestive shorthand. Near at hand, nothing but a few rapid and unintelligible brush marks; from a point halfway across the gallery these hieroglyphics take form and substance, and become miraculously transformed into living and breathing human beings, creations of art whose intensity of life insures their immortality.

REMBRANDT AT HOME

REMBRANDT AT HOME

A DISMAL afternoon, with gusts of cold wind and an intermittent drizzle. The streets of Amsterdam, dark and dull in the best of weather, are more than ever gloomy and forbidding. Black houses, black canals, black clothes, black pavements, and black skies. From the broad Wetering-Schans, looking across the bridge and the Stadhouders-Kade, the unending brick façade of the new Rijks-Museum looms, ponderous, cheerless, like a storage-warehouse. At the doors a knot of peasants, *endimanchés*, in their sombre North Holland costumes, are entering the vast treasure-house, open-mouthed, ready to laugh over Jan Steen's broad sarcasms, to marvel ingenuously over Gerard Dow's microscopic finish, and to recognize their

own prototypes in the physiognomies of Adrian Van Ostade's pippin-cheeked little people.

A climb up the shadowy stone stairs brings one to the great antechamber, from which the long Gallery of Honor opens, extending entirely across the middle of the building to the Rembrandt room. Far away, through this stately vista, appears the immortal "Night Watch," glowing like a distant gleam of mellow and vibrating sunlight in a dark place. At first the illusion is almost perfect. It is hard to realize that this warm and radiant burst of light is not the actual light of day shining in through some unseen window. So dramatic is the effect that the turbulent action of Captain Cocq and his men seems part and parcel of the movement of the throng in the gallery. The illusion is aided by

every detail of the hanging and lighting. No picture in the world is more royally placed. It receives the light from a lofty skylight, and the middle of the room is darkened by a large canopy, so that the visitor looks from the shaded part of the gallery into the illuminated part. The painting is hung so low that the bottom of the carved and panelled wooden frame rests on the floor. The picture, eleven by fourteen feet in dimensions, is tilted very slightly forward from the wall, and no reflections from its varnished surface detract from its depth of atmosphere.

The "Night Watch" is not a Night Watch. The most unmistakable thing about the picture is the sunlight in it. Late afternoon is the time o' day; the warm level rays color the atmosphere and envelop all objects in a tender amber veil. It was this light which in-

terested the painter, absorbed him, to the exclusion of everything else; he sacrificed everything to beauty of tone and produced a riot of warm color, with atmospheric gold for its keynote. Portraiture, grouping, arrangement, and all that, which he understood so well, goes for nothing. No interest in the character as such. It is all an effect, — an effect of light, which is surpassingly beautiful, and unlike anything else in art anywhere. It intoxicates the eye, without rhyme or reason. After seeing it, go home, for sane and correct art has lost its savor for the time, and is cold, trite, and tiresome. Van der Helst is like milk-and-water.

It is no wonder that orderly and logical minds like Fromentin's falter and stumble when they endeavor to interpret such oracles as these. They can

not reconcile the result with the means used to obtain it. Criticism has blackened its own eyes by running against the "Night Watch." Why not cut the Gordian knot by saying genius has these unaccountable flights and need not explain itself? Surely, no work of art known is more utterly original, apart, unique; none more wholly defies cold-blooded analysis and "scientific" criticism. Who shall undertake to say in what exalted vision the mighty dreamer saw that glory of liquid, molten, transparent gold, unreal as the celestial pictures woven in sleep for those who love beauty? and who shall say in what delirium he dared to attempt the impossible task of uttering the unutterable? The suggestion of that vision, with all its shortcomings, is worth crossing the Atlantic to see. No engraving, etching,

photograph, or reproduction of whatever sort gives the remotest idea of it. No one can know Rembrandt without going to Amsterdam.

The famous group of the six directors of the Netherlands Dry Goods Trust, commonly known as "The Syndics," is less well painted than the excellent reproductions lead one to expect. It was done when Rembrandt was fifty-five years old, eight years before his death; at that time his color was extremely hot and florid; again everything is sacrificed to an ideal of color, arbitrary, unnatural, ruddy; but here we have to do with straight portrait-painting, and it therefore requires a certain amount of effort to get into the proper mood to accept the conventional tone. What I mean to say is that, as a portrait painter, Rembrandt could be so admirably per-

fect, as respects observation of character, penetration, fidelity, the representation of the mind in the face; he could be so lucid, simple, logical, and exhaustive, that this game of Rouge-et-Noir is at first view rather disconcerting. One can hardly hope to make this feeling clear without emphasizing the general excellence of the Dutch Regenten-Stukken, or corporation pictures; for, what with Frans Hals at Haarlem, Jan Van Ravesteyn at The Hague, Bartholomew Van der Helst at Amsterdam, these old giants make one difficult to please in the matter of life-size groups.

"The Syndics" makes such a fine black-and-white, too, that the feeling of having seen it before is uncommonly strong. A good photograph gives you the idea of it: the gravity and intelligence of the six well-to-do cloth mer-

chants, that aspect of dignity, austerity, and personal weight of character. How deeply quiet, sober, modest, genuine, — genuine is the word for it, — and yet how full of ardent life! I think "The Syndics" is the best picture in the world of a first-class group of business men, — men of affairs. It is a commentary, an exposition, and a revelation of Dutch commerce, probity, success, wealth, power, and influence. Fancy a man who could paint all that and more into a group of portraits, and who could also conceive the "Night Watch," a pure fantasy, and the "Anatomy Lesson," and those divine little Biblical scenes, all alive with humanity, pathos, love, suffering, joy, —

"All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame."

I admire Rembrandt's early portraits more than his late ones, for they seem to be better likenesses, and are painted with more scrupulous care. They are more truthful, which is, of course, a supreme merit in a portrait. Take, for instance, the portrait of Mrs. Elizabeth Jacobs Bas, the widow of Admiral Swartenhout, in the Van de Poll room of the Rijks-Museum. This represents an old lady, seated, three-quarters-length; is largely executed in black and white and brown; very simple; extremely conscientious; individuality strong and unmistakable; tone cool and discreet. It is a triumph of close observation and of intelligent statement; and no one who has seen it can forget Elizabeth Bas. Fine as the artist's broader and looser style is, he is at his best as a portraitist when he takes the most pains, studies

his sitter with the greatest deliberation, and paints in his coolest manner.

The fiery tone of "The Syndics" and of "The Jewish Bride" is an intentional and lawful departure from the imitation of nature, but it is an excess and a mannerism. In the minds of some amateurs it constitutes the greatest merit of Rembrandt; it is to them his chief hallmark of genius; they are at least always sure to recognize it; it is handy as a signature; and thus they fall easy prey to the counterfeiters. I have seen alleged Rembrandts of a coppery tone, which were very badly painted, and which had nothing to say. It is possible that Rembrandt did paint them; for he certainly was capable of painting a bad picture. It is only your mediocre men who strike twelve every time.

"The Anatomy Lesson" is a noble

example of intellectual portraiture. It sets forth the absolute dispassionateness of the scientific mind. Its style is elevated, serious, lucid, and virile; and although it is the work of the most imaginative of painters, it is all in prose, and without exaltation. It is not more skilful than certain life-size groups by other Dutchmen, but it is more sensitive, subtle, profound. Rembrandt was only twenty-six when he painted this dissecting-room scene. It is a great picture in its way, but it only foreshadowed the greater pictures to come. "Simeon in the Temple" is also an early work which is full of interest for its personal sentiment, its suggestiveness, and its typical character. A dark, solemn interior, with lofty arches, aisles and walls vaguely visible; a broad flight of steps where groups of little figures have gath-

ered; and in the middle a stream of light falling from an unseen window upon the principal personages, — Simeon, in a rich robe, holding the child Jesus in his arms, and kneeling with upturned eyes (a venerable and striking figure); the Virgin at his side, on her knees; the high priest, arrayed in splendid vestments, raising his arms to pronounce a blessing upon the divine infant; and Joseph, with a couple of rabbis, — all this has the traditional and recognizable Rembrandt flavor in its original purity, and it is exceedingly choice.

RUBENS

RUBENS

THE new art museum in Antwerp is now as much the headquarters for old Flemish art as the Rijks-Museum at Amsterdam is for old Dutch art. The huge Renaissance building, with its twenty-two picture galleries, contains all the best examples of the Belgian big and little masters which were once scattered throughout Antwerp, in churches, monasteries, chateaux, and town hall. The collection of paintings, numbering more than a thousand, puts Antwerp well up toward the front in the generous competition for artistic pre-eminence; and this is as it should be in the home of Peter Paul Rubens. No one can claim to know Rubens hereafter without seeing his masterpieces in the Antwerp Palace of the Fine Arts.

This applies particularly to two pictures, — the "Coup de Lance" and the "Communion of Saint Francis of Assisi." The furious and magnificent *brío* of the "Coup de Lance" is unparalleled. For brilliance of color, vigor of action, and dramatic intensity it stands alone. It excites the beholder by its blaze of color like a royal banner flaunting in the sunlight and the breeze, like a sudden clarion strain of martial music calling a host to arms. It takes away the breath. It is overpowering. Mary Magdalene on her knees weeping at the foot of the cross is one of the most beautiful and most affecting figures ever painted by this potent prince of art. The Roman officer on his dapple-gray horse giving the spear-thrust is a superb type of cruelty. The struggles of the bad thief on the cross are depicted with unspeak-

able power. In comparison with this resonant and inspired work, in which the skill and knowledge and passion of a glorious lifetime are summed up in a tremendous artistic climax, the two celebrated paintings in the cathedral of Antwerp dwindle into relative insignificance. "The Elevation of the Cross" and "The Descent from the Cross," in front of which groups of reverent travellers worship daily from year to year, are in a bad light, it is true, but even in favorable surroundings it is doubtful if they could stand the test of a comparison with the "Coup de Lance."

Two pictures could hardly be more unlike than the "Coup de Lance" and the "Communion of Saint Francis of Assisi." The latter is painted almost wholly in a rich scale of quiet brown tones, and it is pre-eminently a picture

of tragic sentiment, in which the artist, more than in any other work, gave free rein to his consciousness of the sadness of death. Saint Francis, dying, has been brought to the altar to receive the bread of heaven. There he kneels, supported tenderly by two of his brethren, and surrounded by a group of the monks of his order, who are vainly endeavoring to keep back their tears. The working of grief in the lineaments of these robust men is indescribably pathetic. There are few pictures by the great masters of expression which appeal more touchingly to the sympathies of the observer. The false popular impression regarding Rubens, which credits him with nothing more exalted than the representation of carnal, material, and pagan beauty, of the earth earthy, is completely and finally refuted by this sacred work of feeling.

Fromentin was deeply touched by the "Communion of Saint Francis of Assisi," and devoted to it one of his most heart-felt pages.

FORTUNY

FORTUNY

THE name of Mariano Fortuny is one to conjure with. He had but a brief career, painted few pictures, and when he died, at the age of thirty-six, he left a great reputation, which has not shrunk in the last twenty years. Fortuny stands for all that is technically brilliant in the modern art of painting; he founded the "school of the hand," as Yriarte called it; he was the father of the whole brood of virtuosi like Zamacoïs, Domingo, Madrazo, Rico, Boldini. He was responsible for the thing of chiffons and bibelots that we call the Hispano-Roman water-color school. He was a sun-worshipper; he loved light; whatever sparkled attracted him: he was a moth, a Zoroastrian, a civilized savage. He painted without

sentiment, without feeling, without sympathy. His pictures are still-life pieces, in which a man is a man and a vase is a vase, and one is as good as the other; but so well did he do the work that no one who knows good painting is able to lay it up against him. He was a painter to his finger-tips, and there is a strangely fascinating, barbaric flavor in his best work, which is unlike that of any other artist. Such drawing, such color, such a sense of the character of things, such a command of expression, such a certainty, mastery, ease, and perfection of method rise almost to the plane of the superhuman.

The most characteristic, congenial, racy, and spontaneous picture that Fortuny ever painted, the work by which he can best be estimated and known,

that which reveals him in his most intimate and natural vein, — in a word, the Fortuny *par excellence*, — is the "Arab Fantasia." Although the Spaniards conquered the Moors, the vanquished race exerted an acknowledged influence over the victors. Fortuny was one of those Spaniards so constituted that he understood intuitively the very soul of the Arab, and could set forth by a brush-stroke or two whole volumes of exposition of the spirit of Moorish civilization. It is, therefore, not at all surprising that the "Arab Fantasia" should be the Fortuny of Fortunys, and that it should reveal more of the real man and the artist than the "Choix du Modele" or "Les Suppliciés." The motive appealed with peculiar force to the temperament and taste of the singular being before whose genius the world

of art was to prostrate itself in an ecstasy of admiration and whose virtuosity actually demanded a new vocabulary for its definition. A relatively early example, this wonderful canvas represents a group of four or five Arab warriors going through an extravagant war dance, the purpose of which is to arouse martial ardor by means of the most barbaric motions and noises, such as jumping, whirling, howling, and firing their rifles, with a frenzied abandon. The fantasia is watched with intense interest by a crowd of spectators, including sheiks, soldiers, idlers, and others, who stand about in their white and colored burnouses. One of the company is mounted on a horse; another has his pet lion with him. Some of the men are excited; others are indifferent; and there are some who appear

drowsy. The types of African character are admirable. Though on a small scale, the figures are each and all completely studied portraits, each having its individual and racial qualities exquisitely rendered. In the dancing maniacs in the foreground, the artist has conveyed an astounding impression of the strenuous movement and wildness of the subject, and the work has been justly called a veritable feat of dash, of dazzling color and energetic action. No words were ever coined fit to describe the "Arab Fantasia." It is the concentrated essence of Fortuny's art.

Compared with the "Fantasia," the celebrated and much discussed "Choice of the Model" is frivolous, shallow, even a little vulgar, what with its rose-pink tones, its rococo furnishings, its

superabundance of gaudy Louis XV. properties, and the Dresden china shepherdess pose of the nude model. Yes, I hope it is not priggish to say that this renowned and marvellous *tour de force* has a slight but appreciable *soupçon* of cheapness. It is too precious, too amusing, and, I will venture to say, too evenly well executed in all its parts, to be the unimpeachable work of art. It is a picture which makes not the slightest claim to possess any human interest more than skin-deep, and it is destitute of the first hint or iota of feeling. I hold that it is out of date to exalt the silk-stocking school of art. It is hopelessly artificial and inane. The votary of art for art may gape, stare, gesticulate, wag his thumb, and tear his hair over the skilful treatment of surfaces and the dexterous imitation

of marbles, bronzes, textiles, and what not; but I do not find the pompous and superannuated dandies of the "Choix du Modèle" interesting, except for a moment, nor am I disposed to condone the heresy of making ormolu, porphyry, satin, and pearl-powder the peers of flesh-and-blood human beings, and of lifting the *mise en scène* to an importance equal with that of the actors.

"The Antiquary" is of an old and well-worn genre, but it is painted with an inimitable degree of perfection. In a room littered with bric-à-brac and objects of art, the antiquary sits, with a portfolio in his lap, scrutinizing a rare engraving. Behind him stands a friend, who leans over the back of the chair to glance at the print. Among the things in the room are a jaunty scarlet cockatoo seated on its perch, a suit of Japanese

armor, a richly sculptured treasure-chest, a fine red vase, some pieces of Venetian glass, and, in a splendid Florentine frame, hanging over a carved white marble mantelpiece, a painting of a knight in armor, which is really a likeness of Mr. Stewart, the patron for whom the picture was painted. Fortuny, with his extraordinary faculty of observation and his passion for light, was at his best in painting such subjects as "Les Suppliciés," which figured in the catalogue of the Stewart collection as the "Court of Justice, Alhambra." This beautiful little picture, painted in 1871, is the admiration and despair of artists, who can best appreciate the difficulties and possibilities of the motive. In a courtyard of the Alhambra, looking into the horseshoe arch doorway of the exquisite boudoir of Lindaraxa, one of the few

remaining perfect bits of the Moresque architecture which Spanish vandalism has spared in that mutilated and white-washed palace, several black criminals lie stretched out on their backs on the sun-scorched pavement, with their feet in the stocks. A negro sentinel, clad in a red and white burnous, and armed with an inlaid rifle, squats, in the brilliant sunshine, on guard over the prisoners. In the background sits a stolid Moor on a rug; there are others farther back in the shade. A distant window opens on the delicate greenery of a little garden. In the foreground, surrounded by a border of deep blue and green glazed tiles, is the small circular basin of a fountain. The cool shadows on the marble contrast with the dazzling passage of sunlight which falls across the walls at the right side of the composi-

tion. The drawing and coloring of the intricate arabesque reliefs of the walls, the hanging lamps, the tiles and the rugs, are inexpressibly fine.

I wish that Fortuny's life could have been lengthened sufficiently to enable him to complete the beautiful unfinished painting of "The Alberca Court, Alhambra," with its big oblong basin of water reflecting its arcades, its myrtles, and the splendid Oriental rug hanging over the balustrade of its balcony. This magnificent fragment is laid in, in Fortuny's clear, treble, resonant key; and it is a mosaic of incomparable brightness and lucidity, as gorgeous in color as an old Persian enamel. Another unfinished work was known to the painter's friends as the "Cour des Cochons," for there are some pigs rooting about in the foreground. No doubt the sketch shows

the part of the Alhambra which was at one time turned into a nest of tenements, where Washington Irving first found a lodging in the house of Tia Antonia. There is nothing in the subject but a few common whitewashed stucco walls and red Spanish tile roofs, plus the sunlight and a superb sky; but it is one of the most powerful sketches Fortuny left, and, for breadth of handling and depth of tone, is worthy of Vollon. The sky, merely blocked in, is all movement, animation, depth, and grandeur.

DAUBIGNY

DAUBIGNY

DAUBIGNY is my favorite landscape painter. No doubt there may be others who excel in various regards, but there is none, ancient or modern, who expresses in his work so completely the kind of beauty that appeals to my heart. With those who prefer Corot I have no quarrel, but there are certain landscapes by Daubigny which, although I have not seen them for years, remain fixed in my memory as the most satisfying works of their class in existence. One of these is "The Cooper's Shop" (or, as it is sometimes called, "The Forge") in the collection of Mr. Francis Bartlett. Few nobler landscapes have been painted. It says for me the strong and tender things about Nature that I cannot say. There is in it a world of fine manly sen-

timent. It is full of life and intelligence. It has, in its highest expression, that sense of the meditative, brooding, twilight aspect of the world which is the peculiar realm of Daubigny's art. Yet it is distinctly melancholy, as so many of the great, true things must be.

It is difficult to define the charm of a painter so simple as Daubigny. In order to set forth his qualities satisfactorily, one would need to be equally simple, made of the same stuff. I feel that his genuineness is more invincible than that of other painters; he is genuineness itself. He is grave and reserved; he never utters a superfluous phrase. In their poise, harmony, and serenity, his works are Greek. They impress me like the modest sayings of one who is wise and gentle. The absence of artifice and of rhetoric is admirable; it adds

to the weight and authority with which he speaks. Painters must love his pictures. He is robust, virile, and strong, but never uncouth or brutal. In a word, he is a Man.

By seeking the truth, without egotism and without prejudice, Daubigny builded better than he knew. An artist of such firm fibre, working along the right lines, may well leave his ideal to express itself. If I read Daubigny's thought aright, it is as good as gold. And there is that in it which belongs solely to him. Can any trace of foreign influences be found in his style? He is like neither the Dutch nor the English landscapists, and he is still farther away from the Italians. His landscapes are as spontaneous as those of Constable, but there all resemblance ends. Nature is mirrored naturally, but her visage is glorified by the

filial spirit of the workman. Under the delightfully free, broad, and knowing execution of the surface of his pictures there is a fund of pure and ardent emotion, a spring of deep and tender love, which has not its exact parallel anywhere.

Daubigny is pre-eminently the poet of the river. Who has painted its slow current gliding stealthily under the shadows of rocky and wooded shores, as he has? Who has so felt the beauty of the velvet dark pool where the stream loiters in the morning coolness of its coves? Who has looked with such reverent and loving eyes upon its flashing splendors beneath the fading light of evening? Who has grasped the aspect of sedgy shallows with such intimate truth? Who has so exquisitely suggested the river's mysteries, or so nobly interpreted the majestic seaward

flow of its flood? He has given to the Oise a fame that will extend as far as the frontiers of art extend.

We are not talking of the Daubignys of the shops. A good example of Daubigny is as well finished as a self-respecting picture needs to be. There was one of his works in the Seney sale of 1891 which represented a village on the Oise: a greater perfection of color, light, and atmosphere could hardly be imagined. This canvas had been in the exhibition of one hundred masterpieces in Paris in 1883; it was dated 1875. The small pictures in the Ames collection, Boston, — a "Village Church," "Soleil Couchant," and, above all, "Le Petit Pont," — are of similar excellence. In these compact pictures Daubigny forgets to be imposing, but he is incomparably charming.

FÉLICIEN ROPS

FÉLICIEN ROPS

FÉLICIEN ROPS was a great pictorial genius. He was described by one of his biographers as a Belgian by birth, a Hungarian by descent, and a Parisian by adoption. His birthplace was the quaint and picturesque Flemish town of Namur, and he was educated at the University of Brussels. He became almost as versatile as Leonardo da Vinci. He was a painter, a pastellist, a designer, an etcher, a dry-pointer, an aquatinter, an engraver in all styles, a lithographer, a humorist, a prophet, a visionary, an anecdotist, a traveller, a botanist, an arboriculturist, and various other things which need not be specified. Among his earliest published works were some satirical lithographs designed for the "Almanach Crocodilien." These were

followed by a series of similar designs on stone for the Salons Comiques. In 1856 he started, in Brussels, a humorous weekly known as the "Uylenspiegel," to which he contributed a large number of spirited cartoons. Two years later he made a series of illustrations for the "Flemish Legends" of his friend Charles de Coster. These drawings recalled the biting caricatures of Daumier. From 1860, Rops, who lived for the rest of his life in Paris, made countless book illustrations, titlepages, frontispieces, etc.

Although much of his work is erotic, J. K. Huysmans testifies that Rops himself was a man of orderly life, whose character in no degree corresponded to the candid brutality of his pictures. A man's mental attitude toward women must be to a great extent the result of his personal experiences in relation to

individuals of the other sex. Men who are helped by women, not harmed, and who think of women as human beings and comrades, can hardly understand, much less relish, some of Rops's plates. He was a hater of women and priests. By the bitterness and scorn with which he satirized the objects of his aversion he especially endeared himself to the Decadents and Symbolists, who are more or less united by an affinity of hatreds. Baudelaire's works have been illustrated by Rops in a manner which reveals an innate sympathy with the spirit of "The Flowers of Evil."

Rops had a marked aversion also to publicity of any kind. He remarked to a friend who asked him why he did not exhibit his works, "Je n'expose pas, pour ne pas m'exposer à recevoir une mention honorable." In this contemptu-

ous phrase is summed up all of his scornful and impatient temper toward human society. Whoever looks over a collection of his works will find in it, expressed with a power which compels admiration, his deep hostility to the materialistic spirit of the age. In all of his lithographs, as in all of his etchings and engravings, appears the same savage contempt for the meanness of mankind, upon which he heaps malice, sarcasm, and stinging ridicule. Apparently he deems that the universal lust of gain, the universal depravity of humankind at large, imprints upon all visages and all figures alike a sinister expression, the mark of that all-pervading instinct of perversity which, in the words of Poe, is to be read in capital letters on all faces. The artist found this lugubrious text interesting enough to absorb

him. He has, says Eugène Demolder, stripped away the mask. He has revealed his century with the same intensity as Memling, Dürer, and Jan Steen. Demolder thinks that Rops was strongly influenced in his youth by Gavarni, but his Flemish blood tells in the direction of his robustness, wherein he is a true descendant of Rubens.

"Like an implacable Darwin," writes Demolder, "he has, in his plates, under the white wings of Woman, so much sung by the poets, rediscovered the hideous membranes of the fossil pterodactyles, malevolent flying reptiles, of which Woman is, according to his showing, the normal and diabolical zoölogical continuation." The virtually literal translation of this pretty sentence gives a just idea of the Ropsian notion on the woman question, constantly ex-

emplified in his pictorial series of she-devils.

To turn to a more wholesome phase of Rops's art, his political and religious satires, we find that, between 1856 and 1861, he produced some of his most powerful lithographs of this order, including the "Waterloo Medal," "Order reigns at Warsaw," "Chez les Trappistes," etc., besides the very striking picture of the "Interment in the Walloon Country," which was generally taken for a lampoon of the Catholics, in spite of the author's disavowal of ulterior significance.

The "Waterloo Medal," one of the most stinging satires on the Napoleonic ideal of military glory that the world has seen, is a large lithograph. At the time of its publication this terrible piece of symbolism caused intense excitement. In the centre of the design, a circular

medal in white is relieved against a dark ground. It bears the image of a crippled veteran wearing the bicorne. The medal is upheld by three emblematic female figures. At the left the draped figure holding in her hands a huge pen and a scourge evidently typifies History. She is rolling up her sleeves, and wears a threatening expression. At the right the figure half draped in a striped gauze stuff and holding a pencil represents Art. Beneath the medal, France, typified by a third woman bearing a tricolor flag with the word *Patrie*, is nude to the waist, and defends the flag against the attacks of many skeleton-spectres, wearing on their fleshless skulls the shakos and bearskin caps of the First Empire. All the dark background is filled by a multitude of skeletons forming groups, employed in capering, fight-

ing, and dancing the dance of death. Particularly noticeable is a mounted general reviewing his ghostly troops at the upper right-hand corner. Near the bottom of the composition is a tombstone bearing the inscription "Here lies Marco de Saint-Hilaire." In the lower right corner of the design a personage, with his back toward the observer, standing and looking through a field-glass, is easily recognizable from his two-cornered hat and his long gray overcoat.

The publication of this lithograph was the cause of a duel. The son of an ex-officer of the French army gratuitously found in it a personal affront, for which he demanded satisfaction on the field of honor. Rops was not the man to refuse this invitation, so the meeting took place, but, like the majority of modern French duels, it resulted in no

great harm to either of the parties, though both were slightly wounded.

Rops's next attack was directed against the oppressors of Poland. In the lithograph entitled "Order reigns at Warsaw" he represented a corpse flung on the ground, symbolizing the martyred nation, and the double-headed eagle soaring above it, typifying the tyrant Russia. The foreshortening of the prostrate figure of Poland, semi-nude, reminded some of the critics of the celebrated "Rue Transnonain" by Daumier.

The lithograph called "Chez les Trappistes" was a sharp thrust at the monks of that order. It shows a group of the brethren of various ages standing before a big reading-desk and looking over a book which lies open upon it. One of the elder brothers is expounding the text. An innocent novice listens

and looks, with open mouth. In this group the artist introduces several repulsive types of hypocrisy and brutality. On being complimented on this work by a prominent member of the Liberal party in Brussels, Rops retorted that he despised equally the Liberals and Catholics, neither of which parties had the courage of their convictions.

It is not surprising that some of the Flemish Catholics should have found cause for wrath in the "Enterrement au Pays Wallon," which is one of Rops's most powerful lithographs. In a little village cemetery a poor woman has just been laid away. Her grave has not yet been filled up. Standing by it are her husband and her son, a small boy; and around the spot are grouped the priests and their assistants. At the left the officiating curate, an obese man, is

reading the prayers for the dead. He is flanked by his vicars, who are remarkable for the stupidity and indifference of their appearance. At the right, by the side of a woman who mumbles a De Profundis, a clerk holds up the great cross. Behind him is the sacristan and the beadle with a candle in his hand. On the same side the gravedigger is shovelling earth into the grave. At the extreme left a choir-boy threatens a little dog with his holy-water sprinkler. In the distance at the left two bearers are chatting with a peasant woman. The horizon is closed in by the cemetery hedge. The solemnity of the subject, the variety of the physiognomies, the truth of expression, of attitudes, of types, and the desolate character of the landscape, — all contribute to the impressive effect of the design.

The father and son, dressed in their Sunday best, are striking figures, which, although their backs alone are seen, reveal by the movement of their poses the hopeless and pathetic expressions of their faces. In the heads of the priests and their assistants Rops has depicted, with the mastery of a modern Goya, an eternal type of peasant character, robust and heavy, tenacious and narrow, shrewd and ignorant, hard and grasping. Here, bowed down by the weight of so much ecclesiastical pomp and finery, and wearing with scant grace the brilliant embroidered silk copes assumed for the occasion, they grudge the time taken from their rustic labors. In them is embodied the physical and moral character, the body, soul, and life, of the peasantry.

BOUTET DE MONVEL

BOUTET DE MONVEL

MAURICE BOUTET DE MONVEL is an artist of deep insight, of keen sensibility, of humor and intelligence. He draws with all the perfection and conscience of Holbein, and his acquaintance with human nature is almost as intimate as that of Rembrandt. A fascinating and eloquent historian and story-teller, he makes the past live again. His lively and delicate fancy makes him the best living illustrator of the lives and doings of children. In France they call him "le peintre qui dessine," and, indeed, he draws with that exactitude, freedom, and significance of line that suffices to set him apart on an eminence. It is pleasant to see that this talent is united to so many genial qualities of mind and

heart, that it is the servant of admirable thoughts, generous enthusiasms, and not the mere magic of a pictorial prestidigitateur. Boutet de Monvel represents the charm, kindliness, and amiability of the French character, without its acerbity and egotism.

The series of pictures illustrative of the life of Jeanne d'Arc, from the time of her first hearing of the voices at Domrémy up to the fiery death at the stake in Rouen, is of a vital and poignant interest. No one, whether familiar with the story or not, can go from beginning to end of the series without a vivid, deep, and lasting impression of the grandeur, wonder, and pathos of that historic drama; and it is equally impossible to look at the successive pages of the thrilling story without being stirred to enthusiasm for the heroine. She appears and

reappears, always the same person, but constantly manifesting growth, development, and expansion, mental, moral, and physical, to the last chapter. Jeanne is the peasant girl of Domrémy throughout the story, but beneath the not too refined surface of her personality there is a great soul, ardent and indomitable, which in the hour of emergency flames forth and inspires miracles of bravery. Picturesque, romantic, and touching episodes abound. The pictures of combats are extraordinary for the expression of the individual fury and stubbornness and desperation which were so much more an element of victory in those days than now, and for the expression of all the magnificent confusion and turmoil of hand-to-hand struggles. Nobility and dignity, gentleness and grace, piety and humility, in turn dis-

tinguish the Maid of Orleans, but in battle she is the very spirit of War incarnate. When she recognizes Charles VII. at the castle of Chinon, and kneels to invoke the blessing of God upon his life, she is a more royal figure than any in that court. When she is on her way to the stake in Rouen, and begs to be allowed to stop and pray at the door of a church, the pathos of the very lines of her back and arms is something inconceivably appealing. In each composition we search out the heroine, knowing that she will be the centre of all interest, wherever situated, and whatever may be her action.

For the church erected to the memory of Jeanne d'Arc in Domrémy, Boutet de Monvel is painting a series of six immense panels, and the first one of these panels represents the meeting of

Jeanne d'Arc and the king. She had never seen him, and, in order to deceive her, he wore a less elegant costume than his courtiers, but in spite of this disguise she recognized him at the first glance, and kneeling before him, said: "God give you a good life, Dauphin." The panel is brilliant. The effect of the rich costumes of the crowd of courtiers is dazzling. It is enhanced by the lavish use of gold in the brocades and embroideries. The figures, which are life-size, are kept quite flat, and the only relief is in the heads, which present a most interesting and diversified series of types, each with its different expression of curiosity, disdain, incredulity, or amusement. The heavy features, angular anatomy of foreheads, cheeks and jaws, and materialistic aspect of the majority of the personages, who,

decked out in the most elaborate and costly raiment, are yet so devoid of the finer indications of civilization, — all these details are based on historical study of the most searching and arduous nature, and have an incontrovertible foundation in the portraiture of the period. Art then, as ever, was indiscreet, betrayed what the great ones of the earth would have been reluctant to reveal to posterity, could they have realized what they were and how they looked; but, belonging to a cruel, ignoble, and hard-hearted generation, of course they could not see themselves as others saw them. In all probability, they were especially proud of their worst traits.

The drawings of children made by Boutet de Monvel for juvenile books are marvels of naturalness. In them

are seen types of every imaginable sort of youngster under the sun except the type of precocity and pedantry. They are charming because they are so human, genuine, and care-free. The present generation of French children, brought up on such wholesome and exhilarating nursery pictures as these, may well be envied. It is a liberal education in draughtsmanship to live in an atmosphere of such illustrations. Has there ever been a drawing more perfect in its way than "The Fairy Tale," in which a grandmother sits by the table and tells her story to three children? The gesture of the grandmother's right hand; the look of absorption in the faces of the three auditors; the atmosphere of twilight wonderland that takes the spellbound little ones out of themselves, — all this is almost a miracle of

expression. Nothing could be added to it; nothing could be taken from it.

Boutet de Monvel has painted several remarkable pictures of mermaids. These creatures are not stage sirens, neither are they myths; one believes firmly in their existence. In the first place, they are in the sea; the element in which they live is real water; the flora of the place is submarine to a most slimy degree, and it breathes with that soft aqueous respiration that characterizes the things that live many fathoms below the surface of the sea. The forms and motions of these marine women are unique. Boutet de Monvel regards a single tail as an illogical termination for a mermaid; he gives his mermaids two tails each, — or perhaps I should say he has discovered this to be the real form of the authentic mermaid. These graceful

creatures sleep, poised like birds in air; they glide in and out of tremulous jungles of devil's aprons; they frolic like dolphins and porpoises; and the iridescence of their double tails shines with a lambent glow like that of goldfish and the piscatorial incroyables of Bahaman waters. Though they are never still, their motion has no effort in it.

WINSLOW HOMER

WINSLOW HOMER

WINSLOW HOMER is an absolutely original and national artist; he is the first exponent in pictorial art of the New World. He presents the unique phenomenon of an American painter whose work has in it not the least scintilla or hint of Europe or of Asia. Had he never seen a European picture, he would not paint otherwise than as he paints. Europe does not exist, so far as his art is concerned. His style comports with his subjects: out-of-doors Americans, big, rough, sturdy, and true-hearted men, sailors, soldiers, pioneers, fishermen, farmers, "in their habits as they live," — the stuff out of which the nation is made. He understands them as thoroughly as if he had made them. He presents them in their integrity. He shows them con-

quering the elements, heroic, modest, grand, unconscious. In a setting as vast and imposing as the ocean itself, or the primeval forest, he places, with nobility and simplicity, the continental American type of manliness. The style with which he draws this virile, rude, and clean-cut historical type is directness itself. So straight does it go to the mark, one is not aware there is any such thing as style. Art conceals art. It is as easy as lying, — only, it never lies.

Magnificent and memorable manifestations of ordered power are Winslow Homer's epics of the Atlantic Ocean in its fury of storm. There he is at home. Like the men of Viking blood, he rises to his best estate in the stress of the hurricane. Never, since art was born, did any painter tell such thrilling tales of the sea and of those who go down to

the sea in ships. Dull indeed must be the man who can stand in front of his marine masterpieces without a quickening pulse and a fresh, vivid realization not only of the untamable forces of the elements, but also of the sublime courage of his fellow-men. He stands alone in his mastery of one of the most difficult of themes, the ocean in action. The grasp of reality exhibited in his works lifts them above scientific realism, because such intensity of visual impressions cannot be brought about without an emotional quickening; in other words, no art work so original and profound can be constructed in cold blood by means of the exercise of the mental faculty alone. Therefore, he is much more than a realist. There is in his work romance, imagination, story; how else could he be the inspired interpreter

of the ocean, with its unlimited stores of drama, heroic story and wonder, its world-wide literature of human hopes and fears, adventure, ambition, disaster, love and hate, life and death? Life for him is full of romance and drama, but he does not have to conjure up any picture that Nature does not hold up before him, for every scene is pregnant with suggestions of life, which means a struggle. Man in his grapple with the elements, using his courage, endurance, ingenuity, and wisdom against the blind forces of the sea, the wilderness, and the continent, — such is his material; and to say that he is able to give us some sort of hint of its greatness, to say, as an eminent brother artist once said of him, "he can represent anything that he sees," is going very far, but not too far.

The isolation of Winslow Homer is entire. One may watch his work from season to season without being able to observe in it any trace or reflection of what other painters have done or thought. His peculiarity extends to every detail and phase of his style. Responding to his temperament perfectly, his style is the complete, fit, and final exterior expression of his intention. There is fate in it. He paints as he must. Homer relishes wildness with a fierce gusto. He is a solitary. Let him interpret the meaning of the wind and wave, the torrent and tempest, and these things assume all their own power, splendor, and beauty. Nothing less than the titanic, the primitive, and the natural will do for him. There is undeniable grandeur in the unbridled rush and fury of his Northern cascades;

breadth and force in his suggestion of the swift gliding of the black stream and the headlong plunge of the foaming rapids; and a stupendous feeling of desolation and solitude among the tangled thickets, the giant trees, and the chaos of rocks on the lonely mountain-side. If I wished to show a foreigner how America looks, I would let him see a collection of Winslow Homer's pictures. Other painters might be left to bring to light the pretty, graceful, and tender passages of landscape; but he alone would be able to exhibit the majesty, the sternness, the sublimity of the New World, its vastness, its freedom, and its virgin wildness.

One of the most interesting groups of Homer's pictures was that composed of the water-colors painted on the coast of England. These related many strik-

ing phases of the sailors' and fishermen's lives. "The Life Brigade" was full of suggestion of the rage of wind and wave. The men in their oilskins and sou'westers are grouped outside the life-saving station, on a level bit of sand, which terminates at the top of a sea-wall. Against the wall the tumultuous ocean breaks and uptosses huge columns of white spray. The brave fellows huddle close together in the lee of the little building, and gaze intently out to sea, where, far off, a mere speck is visible, — a vessel in distress. The attitudes of the men, the irresistible movement of the billows, the flying clouds of spray, the penetrating moisture all through the atmosphere, the leaden gray of the frowning sky, the gleaming reflections in the pools in the foreground, — all are expressed with a decision, a strength,

a vivid actuality, which are in the highest degree admirable. "The Ship's Boat" is another powerful story of wreck: four sailormen are being driven on to a lee shore of the most inhospitable description; their frail craft has been capsized, and they are clinging to its bottom and sides, submerged to their armpits in the water. A monstrous wave is lifting them on its crest, and in another moment they will be dashed upon the streaming rocks. The water is drawn and colored with signal knowledge and power. Its liquidity and translucence, the countless accidents of its surface, the rush and whirl of its eddies, and, above all, the upheaving power of its movement, have been seized, comprehended, and fixed with unsurpassed fidelity and breadth. In "Tynemouth" the play of light upon the surface of the

sea is in effect so complete and triumphant a counterfeit of nature that it is but little short of astounding to observe the simplicity and ease of the means used. In "Cannon Rock" there is the same remarkable sense of form, with the dexterity, rapidity, and supple freedom of handling which leave no trace of effort. The drawing is frank, direct, confident; every stroke tells; there is no hesitancy, no evidence of painstaking; it is the joyful and free act of conscious power, as a strong man goeth to run a race. "One Boat Missing" represents three wives of fishermen scanning the horizon from the high rocky crown of a bluff. It is just at the close of a storm, for the sky is charged with heavy clouds which are beginning to break away, and the wind still blows, as may be seen by the fluttering draper-

ies of the women, who gaze anxiously seaward. Two of them are sitting on the rocks; the third stands apart, holding a child in her arms. The arrangement is original and beautiful; the figures are placed in the landscape with a sure perception of the relative importance of each; and although for me the human interest predominates, the background is not a mere stage scene, but an active element in the drama.

The point of view for the picture called "Storm-Beaten" may be some projecting rocks, not very high above high-water mark, on which the waves tumble with a magnificent commotion. The wave which is just breaking comes obliquely toward the spectator, and is still unbroken at its prolongation toward the right of the composition. Where it has met the first obstacle, there is a

concussion which makes the foundations of the ledge quiver, and a vertical plume of silvery spray shoots high in the air above the vortex of milky foam that overwhelms the point. The furious combat of wave and rock assumes such a vivid reality in this painting that one familiar with similar displays of natural forces has no difficulty in imagining the accompanying sounds which constitute such an impressive part of the performance, — the mingling of continuous noises, sullen, persistent, murmurous, as of a multitude of voices sibilant and mournful, the monotone of the ocean, as the background or accompaniment of the crash, the roar, the weltering outburst of liquid tones, the sobbing and the laughter of the surf among the rocks.

"Undertow" depicts the rescue of two exhausted swimmers who have

been carried beyond their depth. They are women, and those who have saved them from drowning are men. A sudden cry for help has gone up, and from among the bathers in the surf, two have been missing. A young man in swimming trunks and a fisherman in oilskin trousers and a tattered shirt have hastened to the succor of the helpless pair. It may be that the younger woman — she in the blue bathing suit — was the first to find herself in actual danger. Swept from her footing, a sudden panic seized her, she screamed, and disappeared from view. Instantly the cool and courageous woman in her company, pausing only to secure a life-line about her waist, plunged into the surf and went to her friend's aid. The picture shows how the brave deed has been crowned with success. The heroine could not

avoid the drowning clutch of her friend, but her noble work has been consummated by the timely help of the two sturdy swimmers who are now bodily lifting herself exhausted and the rescued girl moribund to the shore. Four life-size figures form the group, composed with masterly skill. Beginning at the left is the young man in trunks, who has just got into shallow water, and is on his feet, but who is bracing himself strongly to avoid being knocked down by the next coming wave. His is an athletic figure. He raises one arm to balance himself, and with the other half supports and half hauls along the inert form of the heroine. She manifests every symptom of exhaustion from her struggle, but her eyes are still partly open, and she does not appear to have quite lost consciousness. Not so the

other female. She has caught her companion about the waist with both arms in a vise-like grip, and is completely insensible. The end of the chain of figures is composed of the fisherman, who holds the unconscious girl up and helps the young man bear the couple toward the shore. A great green wave is just about to break over all four actors in the scene, and in the foreground is the seething souvenir of a surge that went before.

A masterpiece of moonlight and an inspired poem of the sea is "A Summer Night." The subject is something like this: the ocean, at night, seen from the brow of a high cliff; a broad and glittering field of moonlight reflected on the tossing waters; the shadowed curve of a mighty wave about to fall and break upon the rocks; on the brink of

the cliff, the sombre silhouette of a group of people watching the surf; and in the foreground two stalwart girls waltzing in the moonlight. The blue, purple, slate, and silver-gray hues of the night form a bold, rich, and novel harmony in a minor key, an effect of splendid and moving majesty. The movement of the waves is indicated by the broadest methods known to the painter's art; that is to say, by the masterly suggestion and summary characterization of the forms momentarily assumed by the most mobile of elements, the play of light upon those forms, and all the accidents and whims of what seems like the chaotic acme of instability. Under the phantasmal light of the moon, the titanic lift of the dark billow which comes impending to its crashing fall, the fantastic shape of its crest uplifted against

the lighted expanse of glimmering blue and molten silver behind it, and the swirling hollow weltering in its front, are full of the expression of power, grandeur, and mystery. The group of figures is a well-composed, flat, dark mass against the illuminated sea; and in it is to be noted the rhythmic effect of a repetition of slightly varied lines.

"The Lookout," belonging to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, also represents night on the sea. A sailor who is keeping the bow watch on an Atlantic liner turns his head toward the bridge, and sings out the hour, with the accompanying report, "All's well!" Only his head and shoulders are visible. He wears a sou'wester and oilskins. His skin is bronzed by a life of exposure to the weather, and in the dim light it looks like bronze, indeed, rather than

human flesh. His mouth is open. This man is not at all idealized; there is something almost defiantly homely and rude in the type. Were anything of the roughness of the man or of the trade he follows extenuated, the work would not be as peculiarly characteristic of the genius of Winslow Homer as it undoubtedly is. It is a stern picture, and the impression it makes is of ponderous solemnity. The atmosphere of it is strangely unreal, but the facts are hard and real. It is a new and weird page from the book of the sailor's life. In this canvas, which hints at so much more than what appears on its face, the painter shows that he has imagination, and, like his other epic of the ocean life, "Eight Bells," it resumes within itself a whole volume of inspired commentary on that life.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, owns another painting by Winslow Homer, representing a stalwart fisherman in his dory, with several fine halibut stowed in the stern, the title being, "The Fog Warning." The sea is dark in the late afternoon light, and though the sky is bright aloft, a fog bank is creeping over the Banks. A sail is visible off to the right at a great distance, and the fisherman rests on his oars for a moment to turn his head for the purpose of making out whereaway his vessel lies. The bow of the dory lifts, letting us see its whole shape, as the stern settles toward us, just clear of a seething wave. The drawing of the wave forms is remarkable for its breadth, its hint of boundless force and bulk; the cold tone and the sharp outlines characterize a phase of marine scenery that is dismal and por-

tentous, but wholly true. There are times when the sea looks as hard and cruel as it does in this picture. The work speaks of peril for the man, but not of fear; the Gloucester fishermen live tête-à-tête with Death, and danger seldom troubles them.

Against the strange, wild, and stupendous background of the Northern forests Winslow Homer projects the virile and sinewy figures of the hardy outdoor type of fearless hunters, guides, and woodsmen. We have seen his sailors braving the rage of the stormy seas; now we see the descendants of Leatherstocking at their work. Homer shows them as they paddle their canoes, swift, silent, over the dark, deep lakes and through the boiling rapids; as they stalk the timid deer among the tangled brush and the ravines of the mountain-

side; as they play the agile trout in the velvety black pool under the dense shadows of the pines overhead; as they glide back to camp in the twilight, the fire shining like a beacon from the wooded shore; as they wake to see the banks of the morning mist rising from the lake and uncurtaining the splendid panorama of far blue mountains looming under the moving pageantry of the clouds. This work has a savor which is as pungent, balsamic, rarefied, and bracing as the atmosphere of the Northern forests themselves. Like them it is a little rough, but so strong, so true, so genuine, that one dares not wish for any change in it, lest some of that strength, truth, and genuineness might be evaporated in the process. And, let me say once more, it is so delightfully, spontaneously, and largely American! Europe

has nothing like this art. In these scenes one breathes an atmosphere which moves over virgin forests, looks up to a sky which bends over no other continent but North America. A great feeling of freedom and bigness, of wide spaces and wide opportunity, of youth and hope and bounding life, permeates Winslow Homer's landscapes and shines from the silvery rifts in his wind-swept skies.

ST. GAUDENS'S SHAW MONUMENT

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THE happy conjunction of a fine stirring motive and a great artist — for the world has made no mistake in its estimate of Augustus St. Gaudens — has resulted in a masterpiece of which Boston will always be proud. The subject was one fit to inspire the highest and best art. It called imperatively upon the artist for a heroic expression of military valor, of moral courage, of manhood in its grandest and noblest aspect. It appealed to all the best sentiments of chivalry, of patriotism, and of national pride. It awoke those undying memories of sorrow and glory which dwell in the hearts of all Americans who are old enough to recall the Civil War. To say that the genius of the sculptor was equal

to the great theme is no mere idle phrase of eulogy, nor are such words to be written lightly. The conviction that on Beacon Hill was unveiled in 1898 one of the world's few best modern works of sculpture, is not to be resisted. That this noble, beautiful, epic work is erected to commemorate the modest but worthy part taken in the war for the Union by Colonel Robert Gould Shaw and the officers and men of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment, is accurate as far as it goes, but this is not all. The true instinct of the artist has shaped every line in his bronze to a typical and representative meaning, so that instead of being a memorial of one hero and his regiment alone, it assumes a national scope and significance, and becomes in a sense a monument to all like heroes and all kindred regiments,—a widening of

its purport and moral which confers upon it a vastly enhanced historical character. This could be done only because Shaw was a national type of the American hero, and his men were types of the unpretentious, self-sacrificing bravery and devotion of the colored volunteers. For, while this broadening of the spirit of the memorial does not make it a less touching record of the heroism of Shaw and his troops as individuals, it does make it a greater historical monument.

It is a matter for special gratification that the monument should be a Civil War monument, so deplorably wide has been the chasm of discrepancy yawning between the subject itself and the well-meant but inadequate efforts to give it plastic expression. From this high relief of St. Gaudens there comes at last a genuine exhalation of the magnificent, colossal

tragedy, the mingled splendor and horror, the pageantry and squalor, the thrilling romance and the unspeakable brutality, of the war of the Rebellion. The sobriety of the art, its deep seriousness, befits the solemnity, the historic dignity, of the motive.

For the first obvious quality of the style of the work is its genuineness. It is not realistic, but it is real; it is not naturalistic, but natural. This simple, almost homely, racy quality of actuality is deep-rooted, staying, robust, and vivid. It gives style without the conscious intention of style; it is the style which is inherent, not a veneer, not a graft, but the inevitable grace and beauty of form which is the efflorescence of the grace and beauty of the thought. Need it be said that this is the universal characteristic of great works of art? This it is

which makes them seem so much more like spontaneous growths than the results of toil and effort and study. This ingrained genuineness, this mediaeval earnestness, this perfect absorption of the artist in his art, relates the Shaw bronze to the divine plastic beauties of Antiquity and the Renaissance by a consanguinity closer than any similarity of exterior forms. So we come back, after all the subtleties of criticism, to the simple old test of nature. The verdict of the crowd and the verdict of the amateur are at one when art most closely interprets the truth of nature; and if this truth, in its higher and larger essentials, be not recognizable, there is no standard for the arts. The higher and the larger essentials are those traits which are to be interpreted only through love, sympathy, inspiration; "not of the letter, but of the

spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

The positive qualities mentioned imply what the negative qualities must be. Distinction implies the absence of vulgarity; nobility, the absence of all that is mean. The figure of Shaw is distinctly noble in bearing, and, without a shadow or hint of bravado, carries out the most irreproachable ideal of chivalry and manhood. His level, calm gaze is set forward, unwavering, as if he saw to the very end and climax of his life, and still rode onward as steadily as Fate to meet it at the appointed hour. This youthful, erect, soldierly figure, which sits so well on the ardent war horse, controls without effort his impetuosity, and, in spite of its almost boyish immaturity, seems born to command, is so fine and virile a type of American hero-

ism that one cannot think of it, still less look upon it, without a quickening of the pulse and a thrill of pride and grief, not alone for Shaw, indeed, but for the thousands who, like him, in the flush of their youth, and with an equal modesty and fortitude, responded to the call of the nation and laid down their lives joyfully upon the sacred altar of patriotism.

And the black rank and file! With what a wonderful sense of human pathos, of fateful forward movement, with what wave-like, rhythmic momentum, as of marching legions tramping southward, with what a suggestion of the slow but irresistible grinding of the mills of God, has the artist clothed these humble, united, obedient, devoted, doomed men! Are they not exalted by this deep, serious art to a plane of Egyptian dignity?

Does not the martyrdom which overhangs them ennoble them? Unutterable sadness, sublime resignation, and an invincible determination is visible in all these set countenances, all facing the same way, all looking toward the South, all intent on a great final business and a glorious death. The impression is not so much that of a group of individuals as of a whole army, a vast, endless, countless host, moving like a huge human tide, hardly of its own volition, unhasting but not to be stayed short of the goal, a mere complex instrument in the hands of Providence, rolling on like a mighty flood.

The scale of the figures is a little less than that of life, and the relief is so high that the figures of the commander and his horse stand out, all but detached from the background, wanting but a

slight increase in thickness to be entirely "in the round." Even the private soldiers are in such high relief that each file of marching men has a projection of over a foot from the deepest part of the ground. There is consequently a noticeable falsification of perspective if the point of view be taken up at an oblique angle, and the best standpoint from which to get a satisfactory effect is directly in front of the middle of the bronze, not more than twenty or thirty feet from the monument. So viewed, the group is most remarkable for its pictorial completeness, its movement, and its dramatic dignity. "To rise so high, yet to remain so still, so temperate," — these words of a great critic are particularly applicable to the relief. The originality of it sets it apart not only from the works of other individuals, but

also from all the schools of sculpture. It is too real and too modern to be classified as either classic or romantic; it is neither Greek, nor Italian, nor French. It has so little of a foreign air that the powerful traditions of the art of sculpture might be said to have existed only as abstract principles, to be fused into new and unheard of forms by the heat of the artist's creative passion.

The artistic propriety of the introduction of the floating symbolic figure, — whether of Victory, Fame, or Patriotism, — hovering over the hero's head, is not to be questioned. The idea seems perfectly appropriate, and the form it has taken, somewhat vague in comparison with those of the soldiers, is quite as it should be, the distinction in the manner of its modelling marking the mystical as contrasted with the actual, and stimulat-

ing without fully satisfying the imagination. Such an opposition of the real and the ideal in pictorial art is not by any means unknown, and, given the due elevation of style and the due poetical feeling to carry out the contrast effectively and without violence, the antithesis is susceptible of being employed with extraordinary impressiveness. In this instance the apparition of a celestial Genius of Patriotism, guiding the hero along the paths of duty and inspiring his soul with courage and zeal, no more shocks the sense of fitness than the supernatural figures in Rembrandt's pictures. In other words, what would be either wearisome, conventional allegory or a ludicrous parody of the grand style in a commonplace work of monumental art here takes its place naturally and without a jarring note, and, what is more to the

purpose, really gives the *coup-de-maître* to the design by spiritualizing it, lifting it off the ground, as it were, and giving it wings.

The memorial is as unique in its architectural form, and as pure, as in its sculptural. The architect, Charles F. McKim, has worked in complete sympathy with the sculptor, and has given his bronze a frame and setting worthy of it, — how can one say more? The conception of the terrace form was singularly felicitous, and, now that it is realized, seems to have been the only, the imperative solution of the problem. I know of no monument so fitly, so ideally placed. The noble trees embraced by the structure shelter and shade it, and seem a part of the scheme. The background, Common-wards, is of a mass of verdant foliage. At all points the stonework of Knoxville pink marble, set upon

a base of Milford pink granite, is enriched by well-chosen and eloquent inscriptions carved in Roman capitals, which form the best of ornamental arabesques, supported here and there by wreaths of bay and well-cut mouldings, by eagles and urns, used with the irreproachable taste, and in the correct scale of size, which we have a right to expect of the architect of the Public Library. The stone benches, the steps leading from the mall to the level of the street above, the gracefully designed balustrade, and the lions' heads which serve as fountain spouts for the basin set at the base of the edifice on the mall, are all pleasing and well-executed accessories, so that there is no uninteresting nor ugly side of the structure, which is good on all sides and all the way through.

GEORGE INNESS'S LAND-SCAPES

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GEORGE INNESS'S landscapes are of the best painted in our time and country, in many instances of the best in any time and country, because of the qualities of temperament with which the artist was endowed; and as it is these qualities of temperament, revealed in the work, which mark the productions of all great artists and set them apart from the commonplace, the mediocre, and the merely clever, it is proper to inquire, with a view of obtaining so much of an insight as may be possible into the make-up of what we call genius, what were these innate qualities, the sources whence sprung so much that was new and fine and powerful and grand?

Undoubtedly such an inquiry involves something of a study not only of Inness's own characteristics as an artist, but also of the universal attributes of the artistic temperament. The great human reservoirs, from which the world draws its masterpieces of art as thoughtlessly as it draws a cup of water from a faucet, are fed by many subterranean springs which flow spontaneously, freely, irresistibly, always giving, joyous to be giving, without price, but not without terrible cost to the giver. These springs are the vital elements of human heart and brain, transmuted into material forms and hues of imperishable beauty by the miracle of creative passion. The mainspring of a great art is the master passion of love, the power of exaltation, the susceptibility to a great and uplifting emotion, a divine flight of the soul.

To be a landscape painter of the George Inness stamp means the possession of a sensitiveness almost morbid, of a power of vision extra-natural, of a susceptibility to certain phases of the earth's beauty so keen as to nearly elevate that beauty to a celestial plane; it means that seeing is a pleasure so rapturous that it borders upon pain; it means to be possessed by a ruling passion that leaves no room for any other interest, pursuit, or theme under the sun; it means that sickness, afflictions, poverty, hardships, reverses, disappointments, are as nothing weighed in the balance against art; it means the daily possibilities of the pageant of sunrise, of high noon, of sunset, of evening, glorious beyond all description, filling the heart, filling the cup of life to overflowing, leaving only one supreme desire, — to paint

it all, as it is, to paint it, and then die.

Oh, what a paltry ambition! says the statesman. What a vain dreamer! says the soldier. What a useless career! exclaims the sailor. Don't understand such a man! admits the broker.

But fame redresses all, justifies the ambition by the achievement, makes the dream yield golden revenues, proves the usefulness of the artistic career, and rebukes the broker's limitations. It is pleasant to remember that in Inness's case fame was less tardy than in so many instances with which the history of modern art has made us familiar, such as those of Millet, Corot, and other great painters of the Nineteenth Century, and that his later years were made serene and smooth for him by the recognition and encouragement

which are so dear to the heart of every artist.

For the last twenty years it has been generally agreed that no landscape painter on either side of the Atlantic excelled George Inness, and it is the judgment of many good critics that he left no peer in his art. Probably there was no landscape painter living in 1894, when Inness died, whose works, if brought together, could have endured the test of comparison with a representative collection of Inness's pictures,— none who could equal him in the impression he gives of abounding and intense vitality. For there is in all his characteristic works a rich, full, pulsing life, which testifies to his wonderful power of infusing his own exuberant spirit into the inanimate canvas and pigments, and making them breathe the

very breath of nature. Thus in an exceptionally emphatic sense his works live after him. So long as they resist the ravages of time, an Inness stands for a living embodiment of nature, in which the sun shines with a true and genial warmth, the breeze whispers amongst the leaves, the clouds float buoyantly aloft or lower over the earth with grim menace of coming tempest, and all is movement, animation, and life.

JOHN LA FARGE

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GREAT as is John La Farge's reputation, at home and abroad, it has not yet become commensurate with his achievements; and as time brings about a wider knowledge of art and a commoner love of it, as the years to come afford opportunities for study and comparison, his fame must grow. In every material with which he works he has performed prodigies which are unequalled in modern art and which recall the glory of the fifteenth-century Venetians. A great colorist is capable of moving the springs of joy and sorrow, expressing all the emotions of the human soul, by one of the subtilest of all mediums. Color is La Farge's sole instrument; on it he plays new airs, improvises the most intoxicating songs.

His touch is magic. Those who come under the spell remain the willing captives of his necromancy. There have been other colorists, but they were not like La Farge, and he is not like them. No one can say La Farge is like this, that, or the other Old Master. He is the New Master, and he is unique.

La Farge lifts one up into a rarefied and bracing atmosphere, filling the senses and the mind with celestial pabulum, and bearing one in a moment, on the viewless wings of Poesy, to the happy isles of the South Pacific, that earthly paradise where sea and land are leagued in perpetual beauty, — place of places for the artist, the country where the soul of the poet and painter feels itself truly at home. In his discovery of the wonders of these enchanted islands he has opened up for

mankind an inexhaustible mine of singular delight. From the hour when he began to send us his water-colors of Hawaii, Samoa, Fiji, Tahiti, and the rest of Oceanica, he revealed to the northern world a new and unspeakably rich province of almost paradisaic charm. To a man of La Farge's temperament the tropics were needed as a complement; they must have awakened in his blood inspirations that had been dormant; his sensitive soul could spread its wings and fly aloft in the atmosphere of Upolu. So it is a happy circumstance that he found his way there. The islands of the South Pacific became fuel to feed the fires of his genius, and he became their most sympathetic and eloquent interpreter. How spontaneous and irresistible then were his bursts of summer song, tender, strong, unlike

all others! With what power, ease, and joy he set before our eyes the opalescent splendors of that strange and romantic island kingdom set in the midst of jewelled seas! Here were islets so ineffably delicate and fragile that they were more like golden dreams of the tropics than realities; and there were majestic empurpled mountains towering to the skies, their fantastic volcanic peaks caressed by the light that never was on sea or land, the consecration, and the poet's dream! How fascinating he makes the slow, rhythmic swing of the tufted palm-tree in the trade wind, the liquid throb of the far surf beating on the coral reefs, the gurgling, splashing, frolicking of the cascades slipping from the moss-covered rocks into their verdant shadowy pools below! As charming in style and in-

dividuality as they are in color and atmosphere, these South Sea landscapes are permeated with the choicest poetry and imagination; nothing in them suggests a task; they are the offspring of a sacred love.

The melting and vaporous stains of rosy dawns wafted across the tender bosom of the sky — something so ethereal and evanescent as to suggest the tones of pearls — are breathed upon the canvas by La Farge with a mastery of the greatest. On the other hand, there is no painter known to me who has the power of taking away one's breath by such resonant bugle-blasts of color, of making each particular hair to stand on end "like quills upon the fretful porcupine" by such thrilling diapasons of color. In none of his works does his genius manifest itself with a purer efful-

gence, in none does his inspiration rise to a higher plane of spiritual power, than in his best stained-glass windows. It is in this field that he most adequately says his word, expresses his ideal, his hope, his passion. It is the sole medium in which he finds means to perform those sublime prodigies in color which make glad the heart of man. His ideas are of the grand order, and, in glass, he sets them forth in the grand style. He makes decorations which are pictures, pictures which are decorations; and I do not believe that any of the qualities belonging to either picture or decoration are at odds with their fellows. Reality and dream blend, fact lives in fancy, truth in fiction, and the masterpiece is a unit, indivisible. La Farge has traits which are as universal as air and light; but he has also traits which were born

with him and which will die with him.

In the window of the class of 1859, in Memorial Hall, Harvard, Cornelia's famous words, "Haec ornamenta mea sunt," might be applied to the radiant jewels of color in which the noble story is so nobly told. But I think that there is no work by any master more fully informed by the religious spirit than the Means window in the Mount Vernon Church, Boston. Shall I dare to say that it is worthy of the immortal passage from the Twenty-third Psalm upon which it is based: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me?" Here is a welcome vision of faith and courage, to buoy the thoughts of the timid above the darkness

of that dread valley where the bravest spirits need support and comfort. And such a sublime landscape, hemmed in by the deep blue mountainous horizon, and canopied by the infinite transparency of the sweet sky, is celestial enough for the Good Shepherd to walk in.

Every land pictured by La Farge is like fairyland; it is fairyland. Strange gleams issue from the dark waters of lakes which lave the feet of azure tropical mountains. Skies quiver with the memory of exquisite opalescent sunsets. There is a hush, a calm, when the fronds of tall palms droop and slumber, and night impends, curtaining the flame of plumage and blossom, but bringing new spells and marvels in star, moon, and colored darkness. Everywhere, first and last, the unwearying

search for expression, the lines, contours, masses, tints, movements, and contrasts that reveal and interpret the inward thought, life, character, the soul of things.

JOHN SARGENT'S PORTRAITS

JOHN SARGENT'S PORTRAITS

THE loan exhibition of John Sargent's portraits held in Copley Hall, Boston, in 1899, produced a state of aesthetic intoxication. The mere sensuous effect of so much beauty, grace, and power was overwhelming. Recollections of the masterpieces of other painters suffered an eclipse, were swept away, as it were, by an avalanche of new emotions and impressions. The brilliant men were outdone; the sober men were forgotten; the thinkers were voted dull; and the romantic artists seemed for the moment but a tinsel-garbed lot of fakirs. One's whole being was (it seemed) influenced anew; the earth rocked beneath one's feet; all the

old standards of art were annihilated; it took away the breath!

But this could not last. The forces that sway the world are permanent, not spasmodic. Headache is the sequel of too much champagne. After a while we began to assert our prerogative of asking questions. Reason resumed her tardy reign, and one's temperature gradually fell to the normal point. How John Sargent's name will stand in the history of painting is the question that presented itself all too promptly. It may be that it is not time to settle that question, yet there are certain conclusions that may be arrived at already, which will at least contribute toward the final and main solution.

Sargent is the most spirited, dashing and brilliant of portrait painters. The supreme quality of his style is its ease

and spontaneity. He has attained the acme of freshness, so that his works seem to have the morning dew upon them; they exclude the idea of effort or fatigue; they are like flowers of the incense-breathing morn. There is a newness in his pictures that even Time must respect. They have the most delightful thing on earth, — youth. "When a work seems stamped on the canvas by a blow," said James Northcote to William Hazlitt, "you are taken by surprise, and your admiration is as instantaneous and electrical as the impulse of genius which has caused it." And, continued Northcote, in a passage of description which applies to Sargent as truly as though it had been spoken in reference to his works, "I have seen a whole-length portrait by Velasquez that seemed done while the colors were yet

wet; everything was touched in, as it were, by a wish; there was such a power that it thrilled through your whole frame, and you felt as if you could take up the brush and do anything. It is this sense of power and freedom which delights and communicates its own inspiration, just as the opposite, drudgery and attention to details, is painful and disheartening." Nothing that could be written to-day better describes the predominant characteristic of Sargent's works. It is not a material and external quality merely: it is the supreme quality in the style, and verily the style is the man. Painters have always set an immense value on this quality, and not without reason. It has been illustrated most superbly by Goya, Hals, Tiepolo, but never more superbly than by Sargent. He is more nervous

than any of his forerunners, consequently his work has more magnetism and vibration. The intensity of his sensibility is almost painful. His susceptibility sometimes grazes the frontiers of the morbid. In the legitimate meaning of the word, his art is sensational.

This peculiarity of the artist's temperament and manner should prepare us for his inequalities, — the almost universal concomitant of genius. When he is happily inspired by a thoroughly congenial motive, like the group of Mrs. Meyer and her two children, the exquisiteness, delicacy, refinement, and loveliness of his work are unspeakably and unsurpassably great. It has the fragility and the complexion of a flower. When, on the other hand, he has a subject that does not appeal to him, he is brutal, and he cannot help it. He

does not know how to dissimulate. He ought never to paint men, unless it be men like Mr. Penrose, the architect, or Mr. Stevenson, the author. Take the Wertheimer portrait, for instance, — was not this an unkind performance? Most of mankind cannot well afford to have the raw truth told in this raw way. Painters are not exempted from the law of charity. The Wertheimer is incisive, pungent, keen as a rapier-thrust. It is text and commentary at once; it supplies its own footnotes. But, though authentic history may be written in this way, it is hard on the individual victim.

The difference between the old master and the modern painter can be illustrated by the difference between Sargent's Wertheimer and Velasquez's dwarf and court jester. There is a certain coldness and disdain in the mental attitude of

Sargent toward Wertheimer, which is not without cruelty; but the Spanish master treated his unprepossessing sitters with a chivalrous kindness and humility which are touching and noble. He lent them something of his own nobility. He was too great to despise anybody. Surely there were mean traits in some of his sitters; but he chose not to see them meanly. I do not intend by this comparison to imply any charge against the modern master; it is purely a matter of temperament.

Sargent looks upon things as they are. The result of this point of view is a certain crudity of statement which is often indiscreet, and gives the impression of harshness. He is unable to assume a sympathy that he does not feel. His treatment of his male sitters often grazes contempt. He has no love for mer-

chants and shopkeepers. Even senators and statesmen suffer at his hands. Let him paint gentle ladies and children, and he rises to his best estate. To his simplicity of style he then adds a charming simplicity of sentiment, as witness the Davis and Meyer groups, the Boit children, Beatrice Goelet, and the Hon. Laura Lister. These pure inspirations bring out all that is tender, genuine, and lovable in his nature. Beauty of character, the invariable touchstone, in life and art alike, shines out from these clear, luminous, and stirring pages of his art.

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